

the past 3 years, and I wish him nothing but the best as a new chapter in his life begins.

Prior to his service in Grossmont, Bob was a 39-year veteran of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Throughout his career Mr. Collins served as a social studies teacher, leadership advisor, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, Superintendent of District One and Chief Instructional Officer for Secondary Schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

In November 2007, Bob became superintendent of the Grossmont Union High School District, where he established a singular focus for the district: the academic and personal success of every student. He has excelled in working with local leaders, while creating targeted programs to address the social and emotional needs of students; recognizing that student achievement is not just a classroom issue.

Restoring public confidence in schools has been a continuing theme of his administration that has been marked by significantly increased standardized test scores, greater parent engagement, and strong community and business relations. His efforts and the programs he developed have been recognized at the local, State and national levels and are models in many other schools and districts. His honors include being recognized as Principal of the Year in the State of California in 1989.

Madam Speaker, let us all applaud the 43-year service that Robert Collins has provided to our San Diego and Los Angeles communities. I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating the many achievements of this great public servant.

BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND AWARE- NESS ACT OF 2010

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction, and Awareness Act of 2010 today, which will help provide accurate, evidence-based information to pregnant and breast-feeding women about medications, chemical exposures, foodborne illness and other exposures associated with birth defects or health risks to a breastfed infant.

Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding often have difficult questions, such as if they should continue taking medications for chronic diseases, or whether they should get vaccinated against H1N1 or the seasonal flu. The bill would establish a grant program to revitalize the national network of pregnancy risk information services (PRISs), more than half of which have closed over the last decade due to lack of funding. Over 70,000 women seek information from these essential services each year.

The legislation, which has been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, March of Dimes, the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists, Spina Bifida Association, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, and Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, would also

call for a national information campaign to help increase public awareness among health providers and at-risk populations. I hereby submit for the RECORD letters of support from these organizations.

There is nothing more important than protecting our children, and this legislation will help expectant and breast-feeding mothers to obtain clear, accurate information about the potential risks of medications, illnesses, and other exposures during pregnancy and breast-feeding, helping them to both avoid risks and improve healthy behaviors like taking folic acid. Unfortunately, research shows that up to half of pregnant women are not counseled by their health care providers about the potential risks of medications they may be taking, and programs to provide this information have been closing due to state and local budget cuts. This legislation will finally help mothers and health care professionals access critical information to help them ensure their babies are healthy, and I urge my colleagues to support our efforts.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS,

May 18, 2010.

Hon. ROSA DeLAURO,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DeLAURO: On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I would like to share our support for the Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction, and Awareness Act.

Each year, about one in every 33 babies in our nation is born with a birth defect. Birth defects can be caused by genetic factors, environmental exposures, or a combination of the two. For the vast majority of birth defects, however, the cause remains unknown. Research continues to reveal important new information about the causes and prevention of birth defects.

The Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction, and Awareness Act seeks to provide a resource for pregnant women who have questions about whether certain medications, infections, or chemical or environmental exposures might cause or increase the risk of a birth defect, or pose a risk to a breastfeeding baby. The bill would support the provision of pregnancy and breastfeeding information services to women and health care providers seeking information about known or suspected risks. Breastfeeding mothers will receive information about how potential risks should be weighed against the significant benefits of breastfeeding. These services will address an important need as our understanding of birth defects and their prevention continues to evolve.

The AAP deeply appreciates your commitment to preventing birth defects and educating the public about potential risks. We are pleased to support the Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction, and Awareness Act, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of all our nation's children.

Sincerely,

JUDITH S. PALFREY,
President.

MARCH OF DIMES FOUNDATION,
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, March 30, 2010.

Hon. ROSA DeLAURO,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DeLAURO: On behalf of more than 3 million volunteers and 1,400 staff of the March of Dimes Foundation, I am writing to express support for the "Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction and Awareness Act of 2010." As currently drafted, this bill authorizes funding to conduct a national media campaign, enhance surveillance and research on exposures that may lead to adverse birth outcomes such as birth defects or prematurity. It also authorizes funding to develop best practice guidelines to improve infant health.

Each year, an estimated 120,000 infants are born with major structural birth defects and one in five infant deaths is due to birth defects, which are a leading cause of infant mortality. It is important to ensure that the public—especially women of childbearing age—and health care professionals have access to clinical and evidence based information about exposures during pregnancy and the period of breastfeeding, because it is an important way of helping to decrease the incidence of birth defects and improve infant health. Unfortunately, studies show that up to half of pregnant women are not counseled by their health care providers about the potential teratogenic effects of prescription drugs that they are taking. Pregnancy risk information services can help to address the problem by making available to women information about the potential impact of exposure to medication, illnesses of others, and environmental agents that can affect the developing fetus and infant.

Thank you for your leadership on this very important issue, Representative DeLauro, we look forward to working with you on this and other issues central to the health and wellbeing of children in communities across the nation and around the world.

Sincerely,

DR. MARINA L. WEISS,
Senior Vice President.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
HEALTH CENTER,
West Hartford, Connecticut.

Hon. ROSA DeLAURO,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. DeLAURO: As the coordinator of the Connecticut Pregnancy Exposure Information Service, I want to express my deep appreciation for your willingness to introduce legislation that would establish a program to fund pregnancy risk information services such as ours. As you know, over the past decade, more than half of the state services across the country have closed due to state budget constraints, and those remaining have experienced severe cuts. We simply are not able to reach all the women who need counseling on exposures that may pose a risk to healthy pregnancies. Without a Federal program to support pregnancy risk information services, it is unclear if we can continue to operate. Pregnant women and their health care providers NEED INFORMATION about exposures that pose a risk to pregnancy or breastfeeding infants. Thank you for recognizing this need and for introducing legislation to assure that we can continue to serve the public.

I am an officer of the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you briefly in New Haven and take a photo with you for our newsletter.

Again, thank you so very much for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

SHARON VOYER LAVIGNE.